

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/neurofrontiers/preventing-alzheimers-disease-through-lifestyle-interventions/29097/>

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Preventing Alzheimer's Disease Through Lifestyle Interventions

Announcer:

Welcome to *NeuroFrontiers* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll learn about how we can prevent Alzheimer's disease through risk factor mitigation and lifestyle interventions with Dr. Michele Longo, who's an Associate Professor of Neurology and the Vice Chair of the Department of Neurology at Tulane University in Louisiana. Here's Dr. Longo now.

Dr. Longo:

So, we're going to start with the risk factors for dementia. We have an update from The Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention from 2024 that identified 14 modifiable risk factors, and being mindful of these risk factors could reduce your risk of dementia by 45 percent, so this is something that I really like to go over with my patients. In fact, I include the graphic in their chart. So it shows that throughout the lifespan, there's plenty we can do to reduce our risk growth of dementia.

So starting early in life is education. Less education provides less reserve and could contribute to being symptomatic from dementia. It's important to have good schooling throughout our lifetime, but certainly early in life. Some of the midlife risk factors that we want to think about are things like hearing loss. Hearing loss doesn't just make you seem like you can't hear so maybe you don't understand; it actually contributes to dementia.

Now, new for 2024 was identifying high LDL cholesterol as a risk factor for dementia, so just as we're concerned about cholesterol as a cardiovascular risk that we address, we also want to talk to our patients that that's important for their brain health to reduce their dementia risk; treating underlying mood and mental health disorders like depression, and then protecting our brains from traumatic brain injuries; repeat concussions is a risk factor for dementia. Physical activity: We know we need to be active for our cardiovascular health. We also need to be active to reduce our dementia risk. Controlling diabetes, stopping smoking, controlling blood pressure, maintaining a good, healthy weight, and avoiding excessive alcohol are all modifiable risk factors in midlife to reduce the risk of dementia. And then later in life, we want our seniors to be social. Social isolation can put you at risk and so can air pollution. And then new for 2024 from The Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention was the finding that vision loss could contribute to dementia, so it's really important to be talking to our seniors about maintaining good, preventative health, like having their vision exams or hearing exams in addition to seeing their primary care doctors.

And then we know that there have been multiple studies that have shown the impact of a good healthy diet on reducing dementia risk, and one study showed that there was a 40 percent reduction in your risk of Alzheimer's by following a diet like the Mediterranean diet; a plant-based—not a lot of processed foods and not a lot of sugary foods—diet like the Mediterranean could significantly reduce your risk not only of Alzheimer's, but also of other neurodegenerative disorders, like Parkinson's disease.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Michele Longo talking about Alzheimer's disease prevention. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *NeuroFrontiers* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!